

# Legislative Fiscal Bureau

## Fiscal Note

---

HF 598 - Sentencing Reform (LSB 1141HV.1)

Analyst: Beth Lenstra (Phone: (515) 281-6301) (beth.lenstra@legis.state.ia.us)

Fiscal Note Version — As Amended by H-1215

Requested by Representative O. Gene Maddox

---

### **Description**

Amendment H-1215 to House File 598 strikes everything after the enacting clause and inserts new language that relates to sentencing options. Sections One through Eight relate to sentencing options for powder and crack cocaine. Section Nine repeals the waivable mandatory minimum term for certain drug offenses. Section Ten relates to sex offender residency requirements. Sections 11 and 12 create a new offense, Robbery in the Third Degree. Sections 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 relate to the repeal of a sentencing option: Determinate term for certain Class D felony convictions. Section 14 provides for a reopening of a judgment and sentence for certain crimes referred to as “85.0%” sentences where, under current law, an inmate must serve 85.0% of the sentence to be eligible for release from prison.

### **Assumptions**

1. Charge, conviction, and sentencing patterns and trends will not change over the projection period.
2. Prisoner length of stay, revocation rates, and other corrections policies and practices will not change over the projection period.
3. The law will become effective July 1, 2003. A lag effect of six months is assumed, from the law's effective date to the date of first entry of affected offenders into the correctional system.
4. The information in this fiscal note is based on data in the Justice Data Warehouse, which consists of court and Community-Based Corrections (CBC) information through FY 2002.
5. Iowa's convictions, incarceration rate, and number of admissions to prison will not change. However, the length of stay in prison for offenders who committed offenses not involving threats or violence will decrease.
6. The repeal of the mandatory minimum term for certain drug offenses will not be applied retroactively to offenders currently serving such terms. During FY 2002, 227 offenders were admitted to prison with this drug offense mandatory minimum term as their most serious sentence. An estimated 227 offenders annually will serve an average length of stay in prison similar to drug offenders who have not been sentenced to serve a mandatory minimum term.
7. Section Ten permits sex offenders to live within a larger area of the State than under current law. This provision is expected to have no significant correctional or fiscal impact.
8. The correctional and fiscal impact of creating a new offense, Robbery in the Third Degree, cannot be estimated due to lack of sufficient data. However, the correctional and fiscal impact is expected to be minimal. County attorneys control the charge level, and this offense may simply be used for plea bargaining.
9. Court hearings for considering the reopening of a sentence will be held in the county of the offender's conviction.
10. It is likely that if a County Attorney opposes reopening a sentence, the Department of Corrections and the Board of Parole will not pursue the case.
11. On average, offenders not serving Murder in the Second Degree 85.0% terms would be recommended to the court for sentence reconsideration after at least seven years have

- been served on their sentence. This is based on the average length of stay in prison for Class B felony non-murder offenses before the 85.0% laws were enacted. This analysis recognizes that many offenders serving 85.0% sentences for Robbery in the Second Degree were plea-bargained from a charge of Robbery in the First Degree. It is assumed these offenders will be treated as Robbery in the First Degree. For offenders convicted of Murder in the Second Degree and serving 85.0% sentences, they will be recommended to the court for sentence reconsideration after serving at least 16 years.
12. The Board of Parole indicates it will review all cases of offenders serving 85.0% terms. At mid-year 2002, there were 608 offenders serving 85.0% terms as their most serious offense. Of these, 590 offenders were serving sentences under Section 902.12, Code of Iowa, and would be eligible for sentencing reconsideration under the Amendment. The remaining 18 offenders were convicted of sexually predatory offenses and would not be considered for reopening of their sentence. Approximately 50.0% of the cases would be eligible for the sentencing court's reconsideration after serving a minimum of at least seven years in prison.
  13. This analysis provides the maximum number of potential sentences that could be reopened under Amendment H-1215 to HF 598. No attempt was made to estimate how many judges would reject the reconsideration of sentences. The actual number of sentences that are reopened if Amendment H-1215 to HF 598 is enacted ranges from 0 to 21 in FY 2004, 0 to 63 in FY 2005, 0 to 92 in FY 2006, 0 to 123 in FY 2007, and 0 to 134 in FY 2008.
  14. The Board of Parole will incur additional costs associated with case reviews to consider reopening sentences. The Board is comprised of two full-time and three part-time members. The part-time members receive \$265 per diem. An additional eight days is required to review cases using a panel comprised of three Board members. The Board will require two additional staff, a Clerk and a Statistical Analyst.
  15. The Office of the Attorney General will incur additional costs associated with sentence reopenings. It is estimated that each hearing will require 1.5 attorney days plus clerical support, to prepare and file motions, represent the State, and travel to the county of conviction, at a cost of \$722 per hearing.
  16. The Judicial Branch will incur additional costs for sentence reopenings. Each hearing is estimated to be one hour for a Clerk of Court staff, District Court Judge, Court Reporter and a Court Attendant at a cost of \$114.
  17. The Indigent Defense Program will incur additional costs for each case that is reopened. The estimated cost per case is \$300.
  18. The repeal of the determinate Class D option will reduce the average length of stay for certain offenders. During FY 2002, 39 offenders were sentenced under this provision. Approximately 53.8% of these offenders will serve a longer prison sentence than if they had been sentenced to an indeterminate term.
  19. There will be cost reductions for the Indigent Defense Program associated with redefining certain Class B, non-person offenses. The savings per case is estimated to be \$1,300. These savings will be offset by the increased number of cases that will be tried at a higher felony level due to the cocaine provisions.
  20. Community-Based Corrections (CBC) will experience an initial increase in parole cases. Over the long term, caseloads will not be significantly impacted. Offenders released under the reopening of a sentence will be released to work release at an average daily cost of \$15 per day. After completing work release, these offenders will be paroled to the Intensive Supervision level, at an average daily cost of \$9.91.
  21. There are 1,404 CBC facility beds statewide. Of these, approximately 466 are dedicated to the work release program. There were 134 offenders in prison on March 5, 2003, who had been approved for work release but were waiting for a CBC bed to become available. The facilities are operating at full capacity under current law. Amendment H-1215 to HF 598 may increase demand for CBC beds, or alternatively, day programming.

22. The average annual cost for a new Parole/Probation Officer III is \$52,000 (salary and benefits). The standard supervision ratio for Intensive Supervision is one officer to 30 offenders. Offenders paroled will be supervised for multiple years.
23. The State prisons were operating at 124.9% of current designed capacity on March 28, 2003, with a prison population of 8,507 offenders. Current designed capacity is 6,812 beds. Designed capacity will increase to 7,142 beds by FY 2006 when the Clinical Care Unit at Fort Madison (200 beds) is fully operational in June 2003 and the 170-bed Special Needs Unit at Oakdale is constructed and operating (FY 2006).
24. The State prison budget is based on 7,600 inmates; the current system is operating at 112.3% of budgeted capacity.
25. The Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning Division in the Department of Human Rights released its prison population forecast in December 2002. The report stated that by FY 2012, the prison population is expected to reach 12,127 offenders if offender behavior and justice system policies, trends, and practices remain unchanged.
26. If the prison population reaches 12,127 offenders, five new prisons will need to be built over the next ten years. Construction cost per prison is estimated to be \$45.0 million, and annual operating costs are approximately \$28.0 million. If five new 750-bed prisons are built and the population reaches 12,127 offenders, designed capacity would be 10,892 beds, and the prisons would be operating at 111.3% of designed capacity.
27. There is no operating cost savings for Iowa's prison system under Amendment H-1215 to HF 598. Rather, the sentencing options are a cost avoidance mechanism.

### **Correctional Impact**

Admissions to prison will not change. However, the average length of stay for certain offenders will decrease. There will be prison readmissions for those offenders released under sentencing reopenings, who failed the requirements of work release or parole, and are revoked back to prison. There will be 3 readmissions in FY 2005, 9 readmissions in FY 2006, 12 readmissions in FY 2007, and 15 readmissions in FY 2008. The table below illustrates the maximum cumulative impact on the prison population. The provisions that relate to cocaine increase the prison incarceration rate for these offenses.

|                       | <u>FY 2004</u> | <u>FY 2005</u> | <u>FY 2006</u> | <u>FY 2007</u> | <u>FY 2008</u> |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Cocaine               | 5              | 15             | 26             | 31             | 31             |
| Sentence Reopenings   | - 21           | - 63           | - 92           | - 123          | - 134          |
| Repeal Mandatory Min. | 0              | - 118          | - 125          | - 130          | - 135          |
| Repeal Determinate D  | 0              | 0              | - 22           | - 22           | - 22           |
| Total                 | <u>- 16</u>    | <u>- 166</u>   | <u>- 213</u>   | <u>- 244</u>   | <u>- 260</u>   |

The cumulative impact is different than the actual number of offenders released annually, due to the long length of stay under current law.

The offenders released under sentencing reconsideration will be placed in work release facilities, and then intensively supervised on parole. This will increase the number of offenders in prison placed on waiting lists, which will increase the need for additional CBC beds. The number of admissions to work release in outlying years may result in the CBC system shifting beds from probation and the Operating While Intoxicated (OWI) facility-based treatment program. If this occurs, the prison population may increase because probation and the OWI treatment program serve as a diversion from prison. Alternatively, CBC District Departments may seek funds to begin or expand day programming, which combines intensive supervision with treatment, electronic monitoring, and daily reporting to a CBC facility. This program permits the length of stay in work release to be reduced while maintaining security.

Offenders released to CBC supervision due to repealing the mandatory minimum sentence for certain drug offenses and the repeal of the determinate Class D felony sentencing option would have been released to CBC under current law; their length of stay in prison is reduced. There is no impact on CBC resources for repealing these sentencing options.

The possibility exists that no offenders may be released under the sentencing reopening provisions of Amendment H-1215 to HF 598.

### **Fiscal Impact**

The estimated fiscal impact of Amendment H-1215 to HF 598 to the State General Fund is an increase in expenditures of \$136,000 during FY 2004, and an increase in expenditures of \$287,000 in FY 2005. Costs in outlying years will increase if more sentences are reopened. If no sentences are reopened, the fiscal impact of the other sentencing options is estimated to be minimal. A breakdown of expenditures follows.

| Sentence Reopening             |                   |                   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|                                | FY 2004           | FY 2005           |
| Attorney General's Office      | \$ 15,000         | \$ 45,000         |
| Judicial Branch                | 2,500             | 7,000             |
| State Public Defender's Office | 6,500             | 19,000            |
| Board of Parole                | 60,000            | 60,000            |
| CBC Facilities                 | 0                 | 0                 |
| CBC Supervision Staff          | 52,000            | 156,000           |
| Total General Fund Impact      | <u>\$ 136,000</u> | <u>\$ 287,000</u> |

Community-Based Corrections (CBC) Facilities are currently at capacity. Offenders approved for work release will remain in prison until a CBC facility bed becomes available. Therefore, costs for CBC facilities will not increase. Additional CBC staff will be required for the Intensive Supervision Program statewide: 1.0 FTE position in FY 2004 and 3.0 FTE positions in FY 2005. The Board of Parole's estimated cost includes 2.0 FTE positions, a Clerk and a Statistical Analyst.

### **Sources**

Department of Human Rights, Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning Division  
Department of Corrections  
Judicial Branch  
State Public Defender's Office  
Iowa State Association of Counties  
Office of the Attorney General  
Iowa County Attorneys Association  
Board of Parole  
Department of Public Safety

/s/ Dennis C Prouty

April 2, 2003

---

The fiscal note and correctional impact statement for this bill was prepared pursuant to Joint Rule 17 and pursuant to Section 2.56, Code of Iowa. Data used in developing this fiscal note and correctional impact statement are available from the Legislative Fiscal Bureau to members of the Legislature upon request.

---